

~~SECRET~~

NSC BRIEFING NOTES

23 June 1954

FRENCH CABINET-KEY PERSONALITIES

Mendes-France, Pierre (Radical Socialist) Premier, Foreign Minister:

1. Born 1907. Economic financial expert. Leading exponent "realistic" approach to France's role in world affairs -- i.e.: commensurate with country's capabilities.
2. Escaped to Britain in World War, fought with Gaullist forces.
3. Prepared rehabilitation plan for post-war France; was minister of national economy from September 1944 -- January 1945, resigned upon failing get program accepted. Economic policy still his major interest; present program calls for increased investments, cut-back of non-productive governmental expenditures, notably military.
4. Maintains that France can expect to be treated on an equal footing with its allies only when it has limited its commitments to those it can be sure of fulfilling.
5. As long ago as October 1950, asserted Indochina too costly, proposed negotiations with Ho Chi Minh, even if this meant important French concessions. Claimed priority should be given to European defense.
6. Proposes to effect far-reaching reforms in North Africa, reversing current repressive policy.

State Dept. review completed

30  
0190  
1840  
25X1

Koenig, Pierre, General (Gaullist) Minister of National Defense:

1. Left active service 1951 to have freedom to express ideas, especially on defense. Elected deputy to National Assembly 1951; President, National Assembly Committee on National Defense from 1951 until present cabinet post, as such favored anti-EDC Meck report.
2. Age 55, born in Normandy of Alsatian stock, looks Germanic; fluent German. [redacted]
3. As Governor General and Commander in Chief of French Forces, Occupied Germany (1945-1949), faithfully represented French policy opposing economic and political reunification of Germany. Personally, however, was enthusiastic proponent of Franco-German accord.
4. Feels France hasn't done enough in building up defenses (called for "40 French divisions without delay" about 1950).

25X6

25X6

[redacted] never attended Ecole de

Guerre (rose from ranks to 2nd. Lt. in World War I); rapidly promoted from captain (1939) to full general under De Gaulle. Good administrator, but little experience in large-scale handling of combat troops.

La Chambre, Guy (Ind.) Minister for the Associated States:

1. Born 1898. Pre-war cabinet experience, inconspicuous postwar political role.

2. Pro-EDC; Likely to be overshadowed in new post because Menden-France is expected to take leading role on Indochina.

Guerin de Beaumont, Jean-Michel (Ind.) Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

1. Born 1896. Career diplomat, intellectual, conciliator. Specialist on EDC, Pro-Atlantic and Pro-American.
2. Played major role in getting Independent support for EDC, but now advocates changes which would destroy supranational character of EDC.
3. Critical of: US Far East policy; pressure on France for EDC ratification.

Mitterrand, Francois (UDSR) Minister of Interior

1. Born 1916. Dynamic, imaginative, an idea man. Replaced Pleyben as National President UDSR November 1953.
2. Resigned September 1953 from Laniel cabinet in protest against North African policy. Believes key to future of France lies in Euro-African build up. Advocates far-reaching economic and Social reforms in Africa. Would end Indochina war to permit concentration African.
3. Concerned with role of French Union in integrated European community.

Faure, Edgar (Radical Socialist) Minister of Finance:

1. Born 1900. Postwar political experience largely in finance, held same post under Laniel. Was Premier in

February 1952--youngest such in Fourth Republic.

2. Emphasizes economic build-up France at all costs to fight internal Communism. Wants cut-back defense expenses to permit raising living standards; believes postponement or change in EDC necessary to forestall Left-Right alliance in France.
3. Feels prompt armistice necessary in Indochina; favors direct negotiations with Ho; holds best solution would be partition.

Fouchet, Christian (GRS) Minister of Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs

1. Born 1911. Lawyer, career diplomat on special leave to serve in Assembly; diplomatic service largely in Moscow and Calcutta.
2. Rallied to De Gaulle in 1940; went to Moscow with De Gaulle in 1944.
3. Probably put in cabinet by party friends to block any far-reaching reforms for North Africa: Paris Embassy expects trouble between him and Mitterrand on African policy.

Bourges-Maunoury, Maurice, (Radical Socialist) Minister Commerce and Industry:

Born 1914: has held several ministerial positions.

1. /Reported in 1951 to be Gaullist, Radical Socialist in name only.
2. Considered pro-EDC; recent press report states he and

Koenig will meet with Mendes-France on Saturday to plan consultation in quest of a compromise EDC solution that can command a large majority.

3. He told Ambassador Bruce on 22 June that he had given Mendes-France a letter stating he would resign from the cabinet if the government broke France's previous international commitments by presenting a modified EDC treaty for ratification.